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# NT 520 New Testament Introduction

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## NT 520 Introduction to the New Testament

### Version 1: **Not A Final Version**

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Spring 2003  
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### “Reaching Forward to What Lies Ahead”

Description: This is an introduction to the New Testament, its content, its context, and its interpretation. In the course of the semester, we will examine the individual books of the New Testament; the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which the New Testament arose; various types of interpretative methods used to study the New Testament; and theological themes in the New Testament. We will work to draw this knowledge together into a means for thinking about the New Testament in our contemporary context.

Objectives: By the end of this course the student should be able to

- give a broad account of the content of the individual New Testament writings and identify resources for further study of these writings;
- articulate the social and historical background out of which the New Testament arose;
- articulate how one's beliefs about Scripture impinge on how one engages biblical texts in interpretation;
- identify a range of questions (e.g., historical, literary, canonical) that might be addressed to particular New Testament texts and explore those questions in the process of interpreting particular New Testament texts;
- identify significant, critical resources for New Testament study and deploy those sources critically in New Testament study;
- probe the interplay of theology and ethics in the various New Testament writers;
- demonstrate awareness of the significance of the original languages for understanding and interpreting the New Testament; and
- integrate these concerns and methodologies in a sound hermeneutic.

### “Study to Show Yourself Approved”

#### Course Requirements:

On matters of style consult Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses* (11th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

Turning in assignments on time is a high priority. Late assignments that have not been cleared with me will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e., A paper becomes A-, B paper becomes B-, etc.). Any late papers **must** be turned

into a faculty secretary who will note the day and time that they are turned in.  
Do not put late papers under my door.

- 1. Preparation, Attendance, and Participation:** Attendance is expected and will be recorded. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that they record their attendance in class. The professor will not record attendance at a later time. Students who miss more than 6 class sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade. Students who have a perfect attendance record will receive one extra point towards their final grade (i.e., a student with a 4.3 will be raised to a 4.4). Students should come to class prepared by completing reading and assignments prior to the beginning of the class period. Each student will have the opportunity to participate in group discussions and projects during class time.
- 2. Critical Book Reviews:** The student will write two book reviews. For the first review, choose one of the following: DeSilva, Veyne, or Theissen. For the second review, choose one of the following: Achtemeier, Camery-Hoggart, Felder, Gonzalez, or Green. Reviews should be 1,000-1,250 words in length (4-5 pages), typed, and double-spaced. For more information on book review expectations and grading criteria, see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (2 x 15% = 30%)
- 3. Interpretive Assignments:** On three of the six interpretive assignment days the student will prepare a close reading of the passage under discussion. This should be between 750-1,000 words (3-4 pages), typed, double spaced. It is due at the beginning of class. Interpretive assignments will not be accepted after class. For more information on interpretive assignments see the file in the course folder on the T drive. (3 x 10% = 30%)
- 4. Final Exam or Project:** There will be a final essay exam covering the contents of the semester. Students may opt for a project in place of the exam. Projects may be in the form of a paper or other format. All projects must be discussed with and approved by the professor by April 18th (40%).

#### Grading:

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure of course work

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

#### Required Reading:

The New Testament (RSV or NRSV; however, multiple translations are recommended)

DeSilva, David A. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*.

Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995.  
 Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.  
 Theissen, Gerd. *The Shadow of the Galilean*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987.  
 Veyne, *The Roman Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

**Recommended Reading:**

Achtemeier, Paul J. *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.  
 Camery-Hoggart, Jerry. *Speaking of God: Reading and Preaching the Word of God*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995.  
 Felder, Cain Hope. *Stony the Road We Trod*  
 Gonzalez, Justo L. *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

**“The Time Has Come”**

Feb 11 Introduction  
 Required: Begin Reading DeSilva

**“Remember the Former Days”**

Feb 13 The NT and a short history of the known universe  
 Required: Continue Reading DeSilva  
 Feb 18 The NT and the Greco-Roman Context  
 Required: Continue Reading DeSilva  
 Feb 20 The NT and Palestine  
 Required: Finish Reading DeSilva; Begin Reading Green

**“Through a Glass Darkly”**

Feb 25 The NT and Interpretation  
 Required: Green  
 Feb 27 The NT and Interpretation  
 Required: Green  
 Mar 4 The NT and Interpretation  
 Required: Green  
 Due: Book Review #1 (DeSilva, Theissen, or Veyne)  
 Mar 6 The NT and Interpretation  
 Required: Green  
 Recommended:

**“That You Might Believe”**

Mar 11 Matthew’s Gospel  
 Required: Matthew; Johnson ch. 8; Begin Reading Theissen

Recommended:

- Mar 13 Matthew's Gospel
- Mar 18 Mark's Gospel  
Required: Mark; Johnson ch. 7; Continue Reading Theissen  
Recommended:  
Due: Interpretive Assignment #1: Mark 1:1-15
- Mar 20 Mark's Gospel
- Mar 25 Luke's Gospel  
Required: Luke; Johnson ch. 9; Finish Reading Theissen  
Recommended:  
Due: Book Review #2 (Achtemeier, Camery-Hoggart, Felder, Gonzales, or Green)
- Mar 27 Luke's Gospel
- Apr 1 John's Gospel  
Required: John; Johnson ch 10  
Recommended:  
Due: Interpretive Assignment #2: John 9
- Apr 3 John's Gospel

April 7-11 – Reading Week

**“With What Large Letters I am Writing”**

- Apr 15 The Gospels, Acts, and the Early Church  
Required: Acts; Philemon; 1-2 Thessalonians; Johnson chs. 10-11; Begin Veyne  
Recommended:  
Due: Interpretive Assignment #3: Philemon
- Apr 17 Paul's World and Ministry  
Required: Romans; Galatians; Johnson ch. 14; Continue Veyne
- Apr 22 The Corinthian Correspondence  
Required: 1-2 Corinthians; Johnson ch. 12  
Recommended:  
Due: Interpretive Assignment #4: 1 Cor. 11:17-34
- Apr 24 The Corinthian Correspondence
- Apr 29 Reading Canonically: Men and Women and the New Testament  
Required: Ephesians, Philippians; Colossians; 1-2 Timothy, Titus; Johnson chs. 17-19  
Recommended:

- Due: Interpretive Assignment #5: 1 Tim. 2:8-15
- May 1      Reading Canonically: Men and Women and the New Testament
- May 6      **“Recall the Words Spoken Through Your Apostles”**  
The General Epistles and NT Ethics  
Required: Hebrews; James; 1-2 Peter; Jude; 1-3 John; Johnson chs. 20-25  
Recommended
- May 8      The General Epistles and NT Ethics
- May 13     Revelation  
Required: Revelation; Johnson ch. 26  
Recommended:  
Due: Interpretive Assignment #6: Revelation 13
- May 15     Revelation
- May 19-23— Finals Week